

## MORRISTOWN ENCAMPMENT 1779-80—A CHRONOLOGY

*The following represents dates, events and commentary that provide highlights of the story of the Morristown encampment of 1779-1780.*

### **Thursday, November 4** **Time to find a winter campsite.**

“The weather begins to get cold and puts us in mind of winter quarters...It therefore becoms [sic] necessary to look out for a proper place to hut the army in.”

*Quartermaster General Nathanael Greene instructing a deputy in New Jersey, James Abeel, to find places that would support a winter encampment of the Continental Army directly under the command of General George Washington*

General Greene will arrive in Morristown on Saturday, November 20, to personally oversee the search.

### **Tuesday, November 30** **General Washington makes the choice—Jockey Hollow.** **Will arrive at Mrs. Ford's house tomorrow.**

“From a consideration of all circumstances, I am led to decide upon the position back of Mr. Kemble's,... [the property behind that of the Kemble estate, known as Jockey Hollow] I shall be at Morristown tomorrow and shall be obliged your ordering me a late dinner. I understand my quarters are to be at Mrs. Fords. If I am mistaken, be pleased to send me a person to set me right.”  
*General Washington in a letter to General Nathanael Greene of his decision of where to locate his Main Army's winter encampment*

### **Friday, December 10** **Is Mrs. Ford not happy about hosting General Washington?**

“... I am happy to think that my Letter to the Director General of the Hospital, should have been anyways instrumental in preventing the Repetition of former Impositions upon Morris Town: & could have wished that General Washington had been as well accommodated without taking up his Quarters at Mrs. Ford's but his amiable disposition & the pleasure he takes in making everybody about him happy will I am persuaded induce him to make it as easy to her as possible: perhaps in the final Result, she will not resent that her house has entertained such a General; nor the Neighbourhood regret that a disproportionate quantity of their wood was sacrificed in such a Cause.”

*New Jersey Governor William Livingston to Rev. Timothy Johnes, father of Theodosia Ford, December 10, 1779*

### **Thursday, December 16** **Washington to Governor: worst supply situation in the entire war.**

“The situation of the Army with respect to supplies, is beyond description, alarming. It has been five or six weeks past on half allowance, and we have not more than three days bread at a third allowance on hand, nor any where within reach. When this is exhausted, we must depend on the precarious gleanings of the neighboring country. Our magazines (storehouses) are absolutely empty everywhere, and our commissaries entirely destitute of money or credit to replenish them. We have never experienced a like extremity at any period of the war. We have often felt temporary want from accidental delay in forwarding supplies, but we always had something in our magazines, and the means of procuring more. Neither one nor the other is, at present, the case. This representation is the result of a minute examination of our resources”.

*General Washington to Joseph Reed, Governor of Pennsylvania*

### **December 20 – 29** **Visitor describes the “Log-house city” of camp.**

“Week before last I visited the camp, and had the pleasure of seeing many old and some dear friends. I found the Log-house city on the declivity of a high hill, three miles south of Morristown.

There the Connecticut Line dwells in tabernacles like Israel of old. And there the troops of the other States lie, some at a greater and some at a less distance among the hills in similar habitations.”  
*Schoolmaster Ebenezer Fitch, January 4, 1780*

**Friday, December 24**  
**Hut building by suffering men---while the country is ungrateful.**

“You will by date perceive that we are in camp, tho’ expect, if good weather, to have the men’s Hutts so far compleated (sic) that they may go into them on Sunday or Monday. The Officer’s Hutts are not begun, nor will they be meddled with till the men are covered. My own Hutt will not be meddled with till after the officers have finished theirs. The severity of the weather hath been such that the men suffer’d much without shoes and stockings, and working half leg deep in snow. Poor fellows, my heart bleeds for them as I damn my country as devoid of gratitude.”

*Lt. Colonel Ebenezer Huntington of Col. Samuel Webb’s Connecticut Regiment, Stark’s Brigade*

**Saturday, December 25**  
**Great distress of the army—lack of money means no supplies.**  
**Music at Headquarters for Christmas.**

Many officers note their men are hutted by Christmas. “The Army is quarter<sup>d</sup> within three Miles of this place, in the usual way of hutting. Head Quarters is in this Town, at the Widow Fords, at the great white House at the North end of the place. My quarters is at the House were Head Quarters was in ’77. (the Arnold Tavern) But there is a very different kind of Inhabitants in the place to what there was when you was here. They receive us with coldness and provide for us with reluctance. The Army is in great distress for want of Provision and forage; owing to the great Departments of the Army being kept in a starvd condition for three or four Months past for want of money....”

*General Nathanael Greene to General George Weedon, December 25, 1780*

Washington hires one of the military Bands of Musick (usually from an artillery regiment) to play at Headquarters for Christmas.

“The Band of Musick – Christmas - 15 pounds”

*Record for December 25th in expense account for Headquarters*

**Monday, December 27**  
**Masonic meeting in Morristown—Washington attends.**  
**Martha Washington arrives at the Ford Mansion.**

To observe the feast day of St. John the Evangelist, there was a Masonic meeting of officers at the Arnold Tavern, and a sermon in church. --

“St. John’s Day, was a Grand Procession of the Free and accepted Masons his Excellency attended, had a Discourse delivered on the occasion by the Revd. Mr. Jones well suited to the Purpose.”

*Diary of John Barr, Ensign, Fourth New York Regiment*

Martha Washington will arrive to join General Washington several days later. Major Gibbs (Commander of the Guards) had been sent with Washington’s sleigh to bring her up from Philadelphia to Morristown. Mrs. Washington will stay at Morristown until mid-June 1780.

**Monday, January 3**  
**Relentless snowstorm begins. Soldiers naked and starved.**

A long and severe storm dumps huge accumulations of snow on the winter camp, and large snowdrifts on the roads prevent supplies of food entering camp. The storm begins and will last four days before ending.

“Our Army is without Meat and Bread: and have been for two or three days past. Poor Fellows! They exhibit a picture truly distressing. More than half naked, and above two thirds starved.”

*General Nathanael Greene to Moore Furman, Morristown, Tuesday, January 4th 1780*

**Wednesday, January 5**  
**Distress of the Army very great—no food and clothes.**

Here we are surrounded with Snow banks, and it is well we are, for if it was good traveling, I believe the Soldiers would take up their packs and march, they having been without provision two or three days. The distress of the Army is very great, and not less on account of clothing than provisions, hundreds and hundreds being without shirts and many other necessary articles of clothing....God have mercy on us, we have little to hope and everything to fear....A few Cattle arrived this morning or else the Army must have disbanded or let loose upon the Inhabitants: the latter would have been the case; But you know how cautious the Gen<sup>l</sup> [Washington] is of taking desperate measures.”

*General Nathanael Greene to Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth, January 5th 1780*

**Thursday, January 6**  
**Storm ends. Private Martin “literally starved.”**

“At one time it snowed the greater part of four days successively, and there fell nearly as many feet deep of snow, and here was the keystone of the arch of starvation. We were absolutely, literally starved. I do solemnly declare that I did not put a single morsel of victuals into my mouth for four days and as many nights, except a little black birch bark which I gnawed off a stick of wood, if that can be called victuals. I saw several of the men roast their old shoes and eat them, and I was afterwards informed by one of the officer’s waiters that some of the officers killed and ate a favorite little dog that belonged to them. If this was not “suffering,” I request to be informed what can pass under that name.”

*Nineteen-year old Private Joseph Plumb Martin, Connecticut Brigade*

**Saturday, January 8**  
**Washington appeals to the people of New Jersey for help.**

General Washington sends a circular letter to the magistrates of New Jersey seeking assistance for his starving troops, calling on the “virtuous Inhabitants” for “Grain and Cattle” to meet the present distress, due to the “...early commencement and uncommon vigor of the Winter.”

“The present situation of the army with respect to provision, is the most distressing of any we have experienced since the beginning of the war. For a fortnight (*two weeks*) past the troops, both officers and men, have been almost perishing for want. They have been alternately without bread or meat the whole time, with a very scanty allowance of either and frequently destitute of both. They have borne their sufferings with a patience that merits the approbation and ought excite the sympathy of their Countrymen.”

Due to the severe conditions, some of the troops have been reduced to stealing from the inhabitants. Washington strongly disapproved of any theft by the soldiers, but says that such acts “could only be lamented as the effect of an unfortunate necessity.”

**Sunday, January 9**  
**Troops starving, lacking clothing, stealing from civilians out of necessity.**

“Our Affairs are in so deplorable a condition (on the score of provisions) as to fill the Mind with the most anxious and alarming fears (Men half-starved, imperfectly Cloathed, riotous, and robbing the Country people of their subsistence from sheer necessity).”

*General Washington describing the troops to General Irvine*

But if the opportunity of a “...firm and solid bridge of ice between them and us” presents itself, Washington would consider a raid on the British on Staten Island.

**Tuesday, January 11**  
**Weather unprecedented, but soldiers deserve high honor.**

“Such weather as we have had, never did I feel. For six or eight days it has been so extremely cold, that there was no living abroad; the snow it is also very deep, and much drifted; it is so much so, that we drive over the tops of the fences. In the midst of snow and surrounded on every side by its banks, the army has been cut off from its magazines, [supply storehouses] and been obliged to fast

for several days together. We have been alternately out of meat and bread for eight or nine days past, and without either for three or four. The distress of the army has been exceedingly great from the weather, want of clothing and provisions. But the soldiers have borne it with great patience and fortitude. They have displayed a degree of magnanimity under their sufferings which does them the highest honour....”

*General Nathanael Greene to an Unidentified Person*

**Saturday, January 15 - Sunday, January 16**  
**Failed American attack on British at Staten Island.**

On the morning of January 15, 2,500 Continental troops (in about five hundred sleighs) and New Jersey militiamen under General Lord Stirling attempt to surprise British outposts. The assault was not successful—the British retreated to their fortifications. After a frigid night in front of the British works, the raiders left the island on the morning of January 16, having captured a few prisoners, and some supplies, mostly blankets, with only six killed and five hundred “slightly frozen.”

*Thacher, Military Journal*

The militia (and some Continentals) saw the raid as a license to plunder and did so “in the most shameful and merciless manner.” *Stirling to Washington, January 16, 1780, Washington Papers*

**Saturday, January 22**  
**Life at Headquarters not without difficulty.**

I have been at my prest. Quarters since the 1st day of Dec[embe]r. and have not a Kitchen to cook a Dinner in, altho’ the Logs have been put together some considerable time by my own Guard. Nor is there a place at this moment in which a servant can lodge, with the smallest degree of comfort. Eighteen belonging to my family, and all Mrs. Ford’s, are crowded together in her Kitchen, and scarce one of them able to speak for the colds they have caught.”

*General Washington to General Greene*

**Tuesday, January 25**  
**The enemy counterattacks.**

British and German mercenary forces attack Newark and Elizabethtown. The American posts are surprised in the raid; with over 60 troops captured, and buildings such as the Newark Academy and the Elizabeth Courthouse and Presbyterian Church burned.

**Saturday, January 29**  
**Washington praises New Jersey for coming to the aid of the troops.**  
(see January 8, 1780)

“With respect to provision, the situation of the army is comfortable at present on this head and I ardently pray, that it may never be again as it has been of late. We were reduced to a most painful and delicate extremity; such as rendered the keeping of the troops together a point of great doubt. The exertions of the magistrates and inhabitants of this State were great and cheerful for our relief.”

*General Washington to Elbridge Gerry*

**February, 1780**  
**Inflation of paper Continental money makes officer’s life difficult.**

“The times are growing worse from hour to hour. The dearth of necessaries of life is almost incredible, and increases from day to day. A hat costs four hundred dollars, a pair of boots the same, and everything else in proportion. The other day I was disposed to buy a pretty good horse. A price was asked which my pay for ten years would not have covered. Of course I did not take it, and shall try to get along with my other horses. Money scatters like chaff before the wind, and expenses almost double from one day to the next, while income, of course, remains stationary.

*Major General Johann De Kalb from undated letter taken from “Life of John Kalb” by Friedrich Kapp, c. 1870*

**Thursday, February 10**  
**“The most terrible winter ...”**  
**“So Glorious a Caus”**

Dear Sir. We have had the most terrible winter here that ever I know. Almost all the wild beasts of the fields, and the birds of the Air, have perished with the cold. All the Bays, Rivers and Creeks are froze up. Nature has given us a fine bridge of communication with the enemy, but we are too weak to take advantage of it.”

*General Nathanael Greene to Governor William Greene of Rhode Island*

“Camp near Morris Town Feby. 10, 1780... (I am in) hopes the Army will be kept together till we have gain'd the Point we hav been so long Contending For. If the Army could bee supported I have Not the Least Reason to think that A Man would wish to Leave it till Peace and harmony was Restord to A bleeding but Unconquered and Still to bee Unconquered Country. For my Own Part if we was Paid According to Agreement I could wish I had two Lives to Loos in Defence of So Glorious A Caus Sooner than bee Over Come. I was Free born and if I Can Support my Self I will Stand or Fall in Defence of my Country.”

*Ebenezer Stanton, Paymaster of Col. Henry Sherburn's Additional Connecticut Regt. to Thomas Goldstone Smith, February 10, 1780 (Original letter from Lloyd W. Smith Collection, Morristown National Historical Park)*

**Saturday, February 12**  
**Winter of this encampment worse than that of Valley Forge.**

“Those who have only been in Valley Forge or Middlebrook during the last two winters, but have not tasted the cruelties of this one, know not what it is to suffer.”

*Major General John Kalb*

**Saturday, February 19**  
**British cannon moved across frozen Hudson River.**

The Hudson River near New York City freezes. “The passage of the North [Hudson] River, even in its widest part...was about the 19th [of February] practicable for the heaviest cannon, an event unknown in the memory of man.”

*New York: British Major General Pattison to Lord George Germain in London, February 22, 1780*

**Wednesday, February 23**  
**First officers' “dancing assembly” during the encampment.**

Thirty-four officers, including Washington, each contribute \$400 (in inflated paper money) to hold a series of dances during the encampment. The first dancing assembly is held by officers in the military storehouse built by the army near the Morristown green. “The house we propose to hold our assemblies at, is nearly built in Morristown, the drawing room 70 feet long by 40 broad, and two drawing rooms down stairs.”

*Col. Walter Stewart*

“Last Wednesday commenced the great Military Assembly at Morristown. His Excellency opened the ball with Mrs. Knox. As the weather was cool, there were but sixteen ladies and from fifty to sixty gentlemen present. There was great order and regularity observed.”

*Joseph Brown to William Irvine, February 29, 1780*

**Tuesday, February 29**  
**Despite dance, no happiness at the encampment.**

“We have opened an assembly at Camp. From this apparent ease, I suppose it is though we must be in happy circumstances. I wish it were so, but, alas, it is not. Our provisions are in a manner, gone. We have not a ton of hay at command, nor magazine (storehouse) to draw from. Money is extremely scarce, and worth little when we get it. We have been so poor in camp for a fortnight, (two weeks) that we could not forward the public dispatches, for want of cash to support the expresses.”

*General Nathanael Greene to Joseph Reed*



**Thursday, March 2**  
**Greene: The army's situation worsens.**

"I have many things to say to you, but was at the Assembly last Night and feel not a little fatigued and clouded. We are merry at Camp but have little to eat either for man [or] beast. Our political concerns grow worse and worse. We are now so poor in Camp, that I have not money to pay the expenses of the Express riders to carry the public dispatches. Our provisions is out and forage gone. The roads are impassible and no communication to be had across the Delaware [River]. Thus we are shet (sic) up in Morristown without the bare hope of deliverence..." *General Nathanael Greene to Colonel Jeremiah Wadsworth*

**Friday, March 17**  
**St. Patrick's Day a camp holiday, as ordered by General Washington.**

St Patrick's Day—in general orders issued the previous day, General Washington proclaims the day a holiday in camp. "...the General directs that all fatigue and working parties cease for to-morrow the SEVENTEENTH instant, a day held in particular regard by the people of (Ireland.)"

*General Orders: Headquarters, Morristown, March 16, 1780*

"While the troops are Celebrating the anniversary of ST. PATRICK in Innocent Mirth and Pastime he hopes they will not forget our Worthy Friends in the Kingdom of IRELAND, who with the Greatest unanimity have step'd forth in Opposition to the tyranny of Great Britain and who like US are determined to be FREE."

*Division Orders, Pennsylvania Brigades, Col. Chambers, Commanding*

**Saturday, March 18**  
**Washington: No one remembers so hard a winter.**

"The oldest people now living in this country do not remember so hard a winter as the one we are now emerging from. In a word, the severity of the frost exceeded anything of the kind that had ever been experienced in this climate before."

*Washington to the Marquis de Lafayette, at Paris*

**Monday, March 27**  
**Council of War held at Headquarters.**

General Washington discusses with the generals whether troops from Morristown should be sent to the besieged Southern Army in Charleston, South Carolina. The unanimous decision was in the negative.

**Saturday, April 1**  
**Another Council of War at Headquarters.**

With the word of additional British troops being sent to South Carolina, Washington and the other generals decide to send the Maryland Line (about 2,000 men) from Morristown to General Lincoln in Charleston. The Maryland brigades leave camp on April 17, their huts soon occupied by the New Jersey Brigade returning from outpost duty.

**Wednesday, April 19**  
**Arrival of French Ambassador -- the Chevalier de la Luzerne.**

General Washington leaves Headquarters in the morning to welcome and escort to the Ford Mansion some special guests.

"The Chevalier de la Luzerne, Minister of France, with another French gentleman, and Don Juan de Miralles, a gentleman of distinction from Spain, arrived at headquarters from Philadelphia, in company with his Excellency General Washington." *Dr. James Thacher—Military Journal*

The Spanish agent takes ill with "a violent biliary complaint."

**Monday, April 24**

**A military review and ball for the French ambassador.**

"At a general review at Morris Town, on Monday last, the troops went through their various firings and evolutions with the greatest exactness, which gave infinite satisfaction to several Foreign Gentlemen of distinction that were present."

*The New-Jersey Journal*, Apr. 26, 1780

"A field of parade being prepared under the direction of the Baron Steuben, four battalions of our army were presented for review, by the French minister, attended by his Excellency and our general officers. Thirteen cannon, as usual, announced their arrival in the field, and they received from the officers and soldiers the military honors due to their military rank. In the evening, General Washington and the French ministry, attended a ball provided by our principal officers, at which were present a numerous collection of ladies and gentlemen of distinguished character."

*Thacher—Military Journal*

This is the last of the series of dancing assemblies.

**Friday, April 28**

**Spanish agent de Miralles dies. Congressional committee arrives.**

Don Juan de Miralles, the Spanish agent who had been suffering with an illness for about ten days at the Ford Mansion, dies around noon. Staff begins preparing for funeral arrangements to honor him.

Three members of Congress arrive at the Ford Mansion. The Committee of Congress includes Philip Schuyler of New York, John Mathews of South Carolina, and Nathaniel Peabody of New Hampshire. Washington had been sending Congress letter after letter begging for the resources to keep his army together. In Philadelphia, many in Congress dismissed these pleas as exaggerations and even questioned Washington's capabilities and truthfulness. Congress had sent the three-man committee to Jockey Hollow to look for themselves, and possibly to debunk Washington's claims. When the committee arrives and witnesses the poor conditions and low morale, one of the Congressmen would eventually race back to Philadelphia with news that the situation was far worse than anything Washington had written.

The Committee's report to Congress warned of an army on the brink of "some violent convulsion." "The repetition of want has had a very pernicious influence on the soldiers," it read. "Their starving condition, their want of pay, and the variety of hardships that they have been driven to sustain ... has soured their tempers. Their patience is exhausted."

**Saturday, April 29**

**Burial of de Miralles.**

"The Remains of Don Juan De Miralles are to be inter'd this afternoon at Morris Town. The funeral procession will move from Head Quarters between 4 and 5 o'clock...."

*Colonel Scammell to General Irvine*

"The top of the coffin was removed, to display the pomp and grandeur with which the body was decorated. It was in a splendid full dress consisting of a scarlet suit, embroidered with rich gold-lace... a profusion of diamond rings decorated the fingers, and from a superb gold watch set with diamonds, several rich seals were suspended. The coffin was inclosed (*sic*) in a box of plank, and all the profusion of pomp and grandeur were deposited in the silent grave, in the common burying-ground, near the church at Morristown. A guard is placed at the grave, lest our soldiers should be tempted to dig for hidden treasure." *Thacher—Military Journal*

**Wednesday, May 10**

**Arrival of Lafayette.**

Arrival at Headquarters of the Marquis de Lafayette, just returned from France. He brings the news that the French fleet is on the way, with up to 6000 infantry to aid the American forces. He will depart on the 14th to report to the Continental Congress. "May 10th 1780 We have heard from the

Marquis. He will be here at dinner. Will you dine with us also? The General (Washington) requests it.” *Postscript of letter from Lt. Col. Alexander Hamilton at Headquarters to Baron von Steuben*

### **Thursday, May 25**

#### **Brief mutiny of Connecticut troops. An execution in camp tomorrow.**

The Connecticut line returns from outpost duty (replaced by the New Jersey Brigade) and is assigned the old Maryland huts. Brief mutiny of the Eighth and Fourth Connecticut regiments in Jockey Hollow.

“We (were) venting our spleen at our country and government, then at our officers, and then at ourselves for our imbecility in staying there and starving for an ungrateful people who did not care what became of us, so they could enjoy themselves while we were keeping a cruel enemy from them...We were unwilling to desert the cause of our country, when in distress; that we knew her cause involved our own...” *Private Joseph Plumb Martin*

“The Criminals now under Sentence of death are to be executed tomorrow morning. Eleven o'clock near the Grand parade: Fifty men properly officered from each brigade to attend. The Camp colour men from the Pennsylvania, Connecticut and York Lines under the direction of a Serjeant from each to dig the Graves this afternoon.”

*General Orders, Head Quarters May 25, 1780*

### **Friday, May 26**

#### **Military Execution - all pardoned except one.**

“26th. - Eleven soldiers are condemned to suffer death for various crimes, three of whom are sentenced to be shot; the whole number were prepared for execution this day, but pardons were granted by the commander-in-chief to those who were to have been shot, and the seven others, while under the gallows. This was a most solemn and affecting scene, capable of torturing the feelings even of the most callous breast...”

*Thacher--Military Journal*

“On Friday last [May 26, 1780] was executed at camp, near the grand parade, James Coleman of the 11th Pennsylvania regiment, for repeated desertion and forgery. Ten more of different regiments were under similar sentence, but for many important reasons were by the commander in chief fully pardoned.” *The New-Jersey Journal, Vol. II, Numb. LXVIII, May 31, 1780*

### **Monday, May 29**

#### **Military review for Committee. New York Brigade leaves.**

“Four battalions of our troops were paraded for review by the committee of Congress, in the presence of General Washington; they were duly honored with the military salute.”

*Thacher--Military Journal*

New York Brigade leaves camp to go to the Hudson Highlands in New York State to be in position where they can move to stop enemy attempts up the Hudson Valley or North Jersey.

### **Wednesday, May 31**

#### **Washington: Unless Congress and the states act, the cause is lost.**

“Certain I am that unless Congress speaks in a more decisive tone; unless they are vested with powers by the several States competent to the great purposes of War, or assume them as matter of right; and they, and the states respectively, act with more energy than they hitherto have done, that our Cause is lost....” *General Washington to Joseph Jones, delegate to the Continental Congress from Virginia*

### **Tuesday, June 6**

#### **Council of War at Headquarters.**

With the expected French land and sea forces on the way, Washington and his generals discuss where to attempt a joint attack on the British. A number of options are discussed.



### **Wednesday, June 7**

#### **British invasion of New Jersey — enemy advances to Connecticut Farms.**

Enemy forces (estimated 5-6000) cross from Staten Island to Elizabethtown Point around midnight, and advance toward the gap in the Short Hills via Connecticut Farms, (now Union) New Jersey. Word of this reaches Washington in the early hours of June 7; he puts the army in motion to defend the Gap by 7 AM. Heavy equipment and stores are ordered to Pennsylvania.

“On Tuesday night the 6th inst. The enemy landed at Elizabeth-Town Point, and early on Wednesday morning advanced in force, as far as Connecticut Farms, within about two miles of Springfield. The Jersey brigade, which lay at or near Elizabeth, skirmished with them all the way up; and such of the militia as could collect, joined in opposing their progress, and fought in a manner that does them great honour, and if possible, exalts the reputation of the Jersey Militia.”

*Extract of a letter from a gentleman at Baskenridge, dated June 10, 1780*

### **Wednesday, June 7**

#### **The Americans respond.**

Washington precedes the army, and leaves the Ford Mansion for what becomes a two week campaign by the enemy. Washington reaches the Short Hills (or heights of Springfield) ten miles southeast of Morristown, by the afternoon of the 7th. But the outpost troops, supported by New Jersey militia, succeed in slowing the enemy.

In a later letter, Mrs. Ford noted “the hurry and confusion with which the Genl. left the house”  
*Theodosia Ford to General Washington, July 21, 1780*

Regarding the American stand at Connecticut Farms, Brigadier General Maxwell said: “Our parties of Continental troops and militia at the defile performed wonders...stopping the advance of the enemy near three hours.”

From Samuel Stelle Smith, *Winter at Morristown 1779-80 The Darkest Hour*

### **Wednesday, June 7**

#### **Battle of Connecticut Farms -- Mrs. Ford's oldest son wounded.**

#### **Reverend Caldwell's wife killed.**

In a musket volley, a young American volunteer was hit. Major Caleb Gibbs reported “...that among the Wounded is Mr. Ford of Morristown where hd. Qu<sup>r</sup>s. is kept he was in the Advance, a Volunteer with Lt. Colfax which gave the Enemy the first Charge; he received two balls thro his thigh.” This was seventeen year old Timothy Ford, the oldest of the Ford children. He would recover and enter the College of New Jersey (Princeton) in the fall.

After their stand at Connecticut Farms, the Americans retreated, passing the Presbyterian parsonage with Reverend James Caldwell's family inside. As the fighting continued, a bullet through the window took the life of the parson's wife, Hannah Caldwell. (Her shooting is still depicted on the local county seal --now Union County, New Jersey.) The incident became fuel for patriot propaganda.

### **June 8 - 21**

#### **Maneuvering by both sides.**

The two armies reposition themselves and Washington makes probing advances through Elizabethtown. Concern about a possible strike up the Hudson River, Washington shifts himself and half of his remaining forces northward, but behind the mountains from where he can respond to attacks either at Morristown or West Point. General Greene is placed in command of the forces facing the enemy.

### **Middle of June**

#### **Martha Washington leaves the Ford Mansion.**

After her arrival home, Martha Washington writes her brother in law. “I suffered so much last winter by going late that I have determined to go (to the next winter camp) early in the fall before

the Frost set in....we were sorry that we did not see you at the Camp – there was not much pleasure thar [sic] the distress of the army and other difficultys [sic] th’o I did not know the cause, the pore [sic] General was so unhappy that it distressed me exceedingly.”

*Martha Washington to Burwell Bassett, July 18, 1780. From the collection of Morristown National Historical Park*

### **Friday, June 23** **Second British attack -- fighting at Springfield, NJ.**

British forces advance quickly from Elizabethtown Point toward Morristown, while their troop ships sail up the Hudson. The move up the Hudson fails to draw Washington across the mountains, but Greene is hard pressed. The bridge over the Rahway River allowing access to Springfield is bravely blocked by Col. Israel Angell’s 2nd Rhode Island regiment. They hold off troops five times their number for over half an hour, retreating only after taking heavy casualties, as “superior numbers overcame obstinate bravery.” In the late afternoon, the enemy burns Springfield and withdraws. In the night, they cross back to Staten Island. Washington reaches Greene that same night. On June 23, The Ford mansion is finally left by the Committee from Congress and others associated with Headquarters.

"The gallant behavior of Colonel’s Angell’s regiment on the 23d inst., at Springfield, reflects the highest honor upon the officers and men. They disputed an important pass with so obstinate a bravery that they lost upwards of forty in killed, wounded and missing, before they gave up their ground to a vast superiority of force."

*General Washington to Governor William Greene of Rhode Island*

### **Summer - November 1780** **Conclusion and aftermath.**

In camp at Jockey Hollow, most of the huts are abandoned, the sick and invalid left behind are gathered at the Pennsylvania Line. During the summer, Deputy QMG Joseph Lewis stops theft of materials from the huts, and they are later given to the inhabitants as compensation.

Thomas J. Winslow  
Park Ranger/Education Specialist  
Morristown National Historical Park

*(Quote “headlines” and some edits from NJN website for  
“Morristown: Where America Survived” documentary)*